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VEGETABLES
WINTER ACREAGE
(January, February, March)

January 18, 2000

FLORIDA

This report reflects conditions as of January 1 and represents acreage for harvest during the winter months of January, February, March. Estimated acreage for harvest by growing areas is presented in order: area, previous year (1999), current year (2000).

WEATHER: Strong winds and abundant rain buffeted crops and blew some blooms and mature fruit off trees, plants, and vines in some parts of the southern Peninsula as Hurricane Irene passed in mid-October with Dade County and parts of the Southwest and East Coast regions feeling the brunt of this storm. Fall crop yields in the affected areas were significantly reduced due to this damage. Rain from the storm ranged from three inches along the East Coast to over twelve inches in Dade and Broward counties. For the month of October, rainfall ranged from about a half inch at Madison to over twenty inches at Ft. Lauderdale. Temperatures during the first part of October were mostly warm. Cooler weather arrived during the last half of the month with a few Panhandle and extreme northern Peninsula localities reporting frost during the last week. Temperatures averaged normal to two degrees above for the whole month of October. Drier and mostly warmer weather during November and December aided recovery of crops from the hurricane damage. November rain ranged from none at the Moore Haven lock to about five and a third inches at Madison. Temperatures during November averaged from one degree below normal to three degrees above. Temperatures dipped into the 30s across some northern Peninsula and Panhandle areas after mid-November with only very light frost reported. As December arrived, temperatures dipped into the 30s in many central Peninsula areas but caused no significant damage to crops. During most of December temperatures averaged normal to five degrees above. In late December cold weather dipped into many central Peninsula localities causing light frosts with no significant crop damage reported.

TOMATOES: Flooding caused by Hurricane Irene during the second week of October significantly damaged some plants and delayed some transplanting of the winter crop. Dade County growers replanted the acreage lost to this flooding. Dry, mild conditions during the last half of October, all of November and most of December allowed plants to recover and winter crop transplanting to get back on schedule. By mid-December, Dade County plants damaged by Hurricane Irene were making a good crop above the crown and while southwestern and East Coast

growers started picking acreage that had no damage from the storm. Dade County producers began harvesting in late December with some first pick yields lower than normal due to the storm damage. (Southwest, 9,600, 9,600; Dade, 4,000, 2,950; East Coast, 2,300, 2,050; all areas, 15,900, 14,600)

SWEET CORN: Flooding caused by Hurricane Irene's rains delayed some winter crop planting in the East Coast and Dade county areas. By late October, planting increased in the southern Peninsula growing regions. Mostly dry and mild weather during November and most of December aided crop development and allowed planting to progress normally. The oldest acreage in Dade County began tasseling in early to mid-December. Dade County growers expected harvesting to start about mid-January. (East Coast and Dade County, 4,800, 5,600; Everglades and other, 1,100, 1,200; all areas, 5,900, 6,800)

BELL PEPPER: Winter crop planting was delayed by flooding from Hurricane Irene during mid-October in the East Coast and southwestern areas. Planting got back on schedule as fields dried out. Mild and mostly dry weather during November and most of December provided nearly ideal conditions for plant growth and development. Cool temperatures during late December caused no significant damage to the crop. (Southwest and Central, 1,900, 2,050; Southeast, 3,100, 2,950; all areas, 5,000, 5,000)

CABBAGE: Planting and harvest are active in all areas. Crop is in fair to good condition. Quality is good. Head size is mostly small to medium. (North, Hastings, 3,000, 3,000; other areas, 3,000, 3,000; all areas, 6,000, 6,000)

EGGPLANT: The crop is in mostly good condition. Harvesting of regular and specialty types is active. First cuts are producing good quality and color. (All areas, 700, 600)

SNAP BEANS: Planting and harvesting are both active. The crop is in good condition. Quality and color are both good. (All areas, 9,500, 9,600)

STRAWBERRIES: Strawberry acreage is up two percent from both 1998 and 1999. Harvest started near the end of November and has had no major problems. Quality is mostly good and supplies are increasing. (All areas, 6,200, 6,300)

UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 14 selected fresh market vegetables during the winter quarter is forecast at 199,300 acres. This is 2 percent above 1999 and 1998. Acreage increases in snap beans, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, sweet corn, and spinach more than offset declines in celery, eggplant, and tomatoes. Spinach, cauliflower, and sweet corn had the largest

acreage increases, while eggplant and tomatoes showed the largest acreage decreases. Broccoli, head lettuce, and bell peppers remained steady. Acres planted for spring onions, at 40,500, were up slightly from 1999 and up 4 percent from 1998.

Selected Fresh Market Vegetables: Area for Harvest by Crop, State, and
Total, Winter Season, 1998-2000

Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Winter acreage			2000 area for harvest as percent of 1999
		Harvested		For harvest 2000	
		1998	1999		
		Acres			Percent
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	11,500	9,500	9,600	101
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	4,800	6,000	6,000	100
Texas	Dec-Mar	6,500	7,000	7,800	111
Total		11,300	13,000	13,800	106
SWEET CORN:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	5,800	5,900	6,800	115
EGGPLANT:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	800	700	600	86
ESCAROLE/ENDIVE:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	750	750	2/	2/
BELL PEPPER: ^{1/}					
Florida	Jan-Mar	4,300	5,000	5,000	100
TOMATOES:					
Florida	Jan-Mar	10,900	15,900	14,600	92
STRAWBERRIES ^{1/}					
Florida	Dec-May	6,200	6,200	6,300	102
CARROTS: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	21,000	22,000	23,000	105
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,300	2,800	3,500	125
Total		23,300	24,800	26,500	107
HEAD LETTUCE:					
Arizona--Western	Nov-Apr	51,000	44,000	45,000	102
California	Jan-Mar	17,000	20,500	19,300	95
Total		68,000	64,500	64,500	100
BROCCOLI: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	30,500	30,000	30,000	100
CAULIFLOWER: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	9,000	10,000	11,500	115
CELERY: ^{1/}					
California	Jan-Mar	7,300	7,800	7,500	96
SPINACH:					
Texas	Dec-Mar	2,500	2,100	2,600	124
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		45,050	49,950	48,900	98
United States		196,250	196,150	199,300	102

^{1/} Includes fresh market and processing. ^{2/} Not published to avoid disclosure.